

3.4 Hazardous Waste Sites

3.4.1 Background

SEA identified hazardous waste and hazardous material (including petroleum products) spill sites near proposed construction activities and railroad operations. As a general guide, SEA focuses on the area within or adjacent to areas potentially disturbed by Proposed Action-related construction activities.

Typical railroad construction activities and operations are unlikely to disturb soils located a practical distance from the rail lines. For the hazardous waste sites analysis, SEA identified those sites that lie within 500 feet of the existing EJ&E rail lines (including Kirk Yard in Gary, Indiana and East Joliet yard in Joliet, Illinois.). In instances where hazardous waste spills occurred, potentially resulting in a migrating groundwater plume, sites more than 500 feet away were included in the assessment as they could potentially impact railroad construction activities.

What is hazardous waste?

Hazardous waste is waste with properties defined under the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) that make it dangerous or potentially harmful to human health or the environment.

3.4.2 Existing Conditions

SEA identified the location of hazardous materials spill sites, hazardous waste sites, reported releases, and pollution incidents to assess the potential effects that may occur as a result of the Proposed Action. To identify visual or documented evidence of hazardous materials spills sites or hazardous waste sites along EJ&E rail lines, SEA used reports from environmental regulatory agency databases, permits, and site-specific records, as appropriate. SEA also studied U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) topographic maps as well as recent and historical aerial photographs. In addition, SEA conducted a site reconnaissance at proposed connections, double track corridors, and existing EJ&E rail yards (Kirk and East Joliet yards).

SEA reviewed governmental database listings compiled by Environmental Data Resources Inc. (EDR) for sites located within 500 feet of proposed double track corridors and within 1 mile of proposed connections and the existing rail yards as described above.

Summary tables from the government database listings for the construction sites are included in Appendix F, and the results of the site reconnaissance are presented below. The environmental incident information provided for both Kirk and East Joliet yards was extracted from the document titled “Preliminary Summary of Environmental Conditions—Environmental Baseline Assessment—Potential Acquisition of Elgin Joliet and Eastern Railway Company by Grand Trunk Corporation, STS Project No. 200704538” (STS 2008), and therefore this information is more detailed than that provided for other sites listed below. Locations with specific site reconnaissance findings are noted below.

3.4.2.1 Double Track Corridors

Diamond Lake to Griffith, Illinois

SEA observed several dozen discarded aboveground storage tanks (ASTs) and underground storage tanks (USTs) along with vehicles and other miscellaneous items near the west end of the corridor. SEA also noted areas of poor housekeeping and storage hazardous materials and petroleum products in other locations in this vicinity.

Joliet to Frankfort, Illinois

SEA observed dumping of refuse in two separate locations near the beginning of the bend in Joliet. SEA noted two to three 55-gallon drums in one of the locations. SEA could not confirm the contents of these drums, if any, during the site review.

3.4.2.2 *Connections*

Matteson, Illinois Connection

During the site review of the Matteson Connection, SEA noted dumping of excess concrete at a concrete ready-mix operation located in the southwest corner of the proposed connection. SEA also observed a junkyard with old automobiles in this vicinity.

Ivanhoe, Indiana Connection

During the site review of the Ivanhoe Connection, SEA noted an old tanker truck in the area of the proposed track. The tanker truck was located along the north side of the adjacent commercial property, A Metz, Inc. SEA observed no evidence of leaking materials, soil staining, or stressed vegetation in connection with the tanker truck.

3.4.2.3 *Railroad Yards*

East Joliet Yard, Joliet, Illinois

SEA noted above ground bulk storage tanks throughout the site. A 200,000 gallon AST was observed immediately south of the existing roundhouse. An 8,000 gallon lube oil AST was located near the fueling track. Several smaller ASTs were observed both outside and inside the maintenance building located in the southwest corner of the yard. A product recovery well was noted in the stream adjacent to the fueling track. The recovery well was installed in conjunction with a reported release of diesel fuel in this area. A fuel pump house is located adjacent to the fueling track. Black soil staining was observed both inside and around the perimeter of this building. A locomotive painting facility and railcar salvage operation were observed along the east side of the yard.

Kirk Yard, Gary, Indiana

SEA noted bulk above-ground storage of petroleum products on site. SEA observed a 252,000-gallon AST containing diesel fuel in a lined containment basin adjacent to two smaller 70,000-gallon ASTs that appeared to be not in use. SEA also observed a 10,000-gallon gasoline AST in the vicinity of a former UST that had been removed. Several smaller ASTs were located throughout the site and all appeared to be provided with proper secondary containment basins. The Spill Prevention, Containment, and Countermeasure (SPCC) Plan for the yard is current to 2009 as indicated by the site manager (EJ&E 2008c).